

Of Chaos and Flame  
by Lens of Sanity

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Chapter One: The Death of Ginny Weasley

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It was a Friday and Ginny Weasley was enthusiastically reading the brand new edition of Witch Weekly, one of her favourite presents ever was when her mother promised to pay for the subscription every year on her birthday. This is one of many reasons that Fridays are the best day of the week when you were the youngest and prettiest Weasley. Absently she noticed that it was the last week of June and that tomorrow would be her and her boyfriend's two week anniversary. That was another cause for her abundant happiness, and her confident declaration of being the prettiest Weasley; her boyfriend was none other than Harry James Potter.

That's right; the Harry Potter.

She had known since they first met at the tender age of ten years old, that the two were destined to be together, and if she was honest with herself she'd known her whole entire life. The tale of the Boy-Who-Lived was always her favourite bedtime story back when her father had read to her as a little girl. And the best game growing up was marrying the scar faced Harry Potter teddy bear her friend Luna had once owned. Not that she would ever tell a soul about that, as she was very grown up now and people -especially Harry- knowing about her doing that would be simply mortifying.

Following her custom on finally allowing herself to open the weekly magazine, she leafed directly to the Astrological Signs page searching for what the coming week would bring. She knew from Divination that Horoscopes were very important, as the past two weeks had been filled with prosperity for all Leos, and Ginny was incredibly eager to find out how best to behave in the upcoming seven days.

'The situation will considerably improve in the final part of the month when you, having Venus right beside you, will be able to enter the gates of love paradise, surrounded by an aura of magnetism and

sex appeal. There are new discoveries on the erotic realm in store for you, and adventure will be waiting for you when travelling, in a cultural or educational environment.'

The Sun's ruby glare on the horizon was noted by the fiery haired fifteen -nearly sixteen- year old, as she had once more concluded that Fridays were great, and that things are even better in the world when your name was Ginny Weasley.

Her vacuous smile began to falter a little as a Galleon, the only one in her possession, was felt heat up uncomfortably in her pocket. After a long moment understanding dawned. "The Dumbledore's Army Coin, of course" she ejected quite loudly from her seat in the school library. Even though she was the one who named the organisation when they were pooling options, she had always thought 'Potter's Army' had a much better ring to it, only she was still a little too shy in her boyfriend's presence back then to say so out loud.

After folding the magazine under her arm and collecting her wand, she took off in search of the adventure promised her in the magazine.

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On her way to the seventh floor corridor with a familiar tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy, the redhead encountered her brother and the bushy haired brunette girl he had been too thick and prattish to ask out. Neville slouched against a wall was the first to spot Ginny's last and oldest friend Luna, who arrived from the direction of Ravenclaw's common room.

"Hey Hermione, where is Harry are we doing an end of year D.A. or something?" Ginny asked turning back toward the staircase and the Room of Requirement.

Ron grabbed her arm to prevent the fifteen year old from continuing as her brother said "We can't go that way, Tonks and Professor Lupin are over there."

Huffing she asked "Okay, I'm sure they wouldn't mind if we were out of bounds but whatever. Where is my boyfriend anyway?"

After dragging the group into one of Hogwarts many abandoned classrooms Hermione used a never before seen privacy charm which she declared will make anyone else hear nothing but an unidentified buzzing. She and Ron then went about outlining what they knew of tonight's events.

Harry had taken his Invisibility Cloak and gone somewhere with Headmaster Dumbledore. Ginny, Luna, and Neville all came to the conclusion that the other two knew more than they were saying but they refrained from asking, knowing from experience that the 'Golden Trio' -as they were sometimes called- never give out too much information when they didn't have to.

Case and point; everybody knew that Harry had killed two of his Defence Professors, and was responsible for Umbridge's unexplained removal last year, but the school at large have no idea as to the details.

Hermione was obviously sceptical that the school was actually in any danger, but she handed out a tiny snifter of something called Felix Felicis which the brunette explained would grant Liquid Luck to the drinker. Harry had apparently won it in a competition earlier in the year and wanted them to drink it in the unlikely event of a Death Eater attack on Hogwarts.

"Well it is the end of the school year Hermione, something crazy always happens to Harry. I think we should take the warning seriously and do as he asked." This was quite the pragmatic attitude from Neville, one which Luna agreed with, while appearing far more focused than her signature dreamy exterior.

Ginny voiced her opinion "Well if Draco Malfoy really has been up to something all year, he'd probably do something on the day he knows the Headmaster is away. Wouldn't he?"

"Fine..." the brunette acquiesced "...Ron, you keep an eye on the map and take Ginny and Neville with you, while Luna and I go watch over Professor Snape's Office. Everyone remember to keep your Potion safe and not drink it until you really need it because there is probably only about twenty/twenty-five minutes worth before it runs out."

They would be in for a long and boring wait. Ginny went back to her magazine after only a few minutes.

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Ginny Weasley was board. She'd been forced by Ron to put away her copy of Witch Weekly because she wasn't looking worried enough. 'It's not like anything bad could happen, Harry will come and save the day if any Death Eaters actually do come' she thought to herself as she mourned the loss of her favourite 'book.'

"They are here, coming through to the Seventh Floor. That prick Malfoy is leading some guys named Gibbon and Yaxley. Oh shit Fenrir Greyback." He looked to his friends and saw Neville with an unaccustomed look of fury across the boy's face. He must have heard the same stories as Ron had. "There are six, including that werewolf Greyback."

Ginny immediately jumped out and started hexing up a storm, landing her favourite Bat Bogey Hex, 'Chiroptera' and a simple Blasting Curse 'Reducto' before everything went black as night.

"This is the twins' Peruvian Instant Darkness Powder, get back and get down NOW!" the elder Weasley screamed in command, and didn't have the time to be surprised at his friends instant obedience.

As he scrambled into Ron's fall-back room Neville asked "I got winged by a cutter, did either of you two get hit?"

The other two checked themselves over and both shake their heads "We have to get to the Order as fast as we can..." He checked the map in the dim light, and after a while finished "...okay, we're clear follow me."

The three managed to traverse across two long corridors and down one flight of stairs, eventually coming to Remus Lupin and Filius Flitwick, who they brought up to speed as to the Death Eater situation. The Charms Professor sped off at a remarkable pace given his size and the werewolf begins arguing for the three to be sent to the safety of their dormitories.

Ten minutes of circular argument later "...we promised Harry! We are not going anywher-" An almightily crash emanating from the

direction of the Headmasters Office interrupted Ron's deceleration, and the four headed off running straight into a warzone.

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Half an hour later an orange Cutting Jinx slashed into the redheads left forearm and brought tears to her eyes "Owie, Diffindo." As her own Severing Charm opened a shallow cut into the cloaked figure's chest, she thought that, worse than the pain, she now has to fight while making sure not to get bloodstains on her new pants.

She had been retreating back toward the Room of Requirement, trading shots, shielding, and dodging scary unfamiliar spells for the past minute or so. Having drank the few drops of Lucky Potion a while ago, she'd felt strange in a way she never had before. Light, perhaps unconcerned may have been a good way to describe it.

On a whim she did a cartwheel while giggling, and a wave of power crashed over her as she watched a thick bolt of deep green light zoom harmlessly over her shoulder. 'Te-he, that one was close.'

"Stoop-aff-fye" she yelled fervently in high spirits, and a jet of red shot from her cool magic stick to impact the chest of the mean Death Eater. "Whoo, I rule."

Looking around the deserted hallway Ginny figured out that she had become separated from the rest of her friends, and seeing the door across from the Tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy was wedged open, she stylishly moved over to take a look.

"Crucio"

"Woop" the flame haired young woman dove into a room made distinctive by towers of junk, leftovers of a thousand failed experiments, and the contraband of countless Hogwarts students. She slammed the door shut and levitated a large oak table -heavily stained and missing a leg- making sure it was wedged to keep the door closed. "Hmm, it's only one Death Eater, why am I running from the bad guys?" she mused to herself out loud.

The door handle rattled a few times and a few hollow thumps indicated unsuccessful attempts to blast through a magically enhanced Hogwarts door. For whatever reason she felt it would be a

good idea to explore the room a little, this seemed to be a good idea as the mean Unforgivable using Death Eater would eventually go away.

As she came to a cupboard on which rested the chipped bust of an ugly old warlock, Ginny impulsively decided to take a look, finding a Potions Textbook which looked brand new on the surface but was all tattered on the inside. "Advanced Potion Making by Libatius Borage, I think this is on next year's book list" the girl muttered aloud to herself absently as she stuck the thing into an oversized robe pocket.

"I think you are correct little girl" responded a young and decidedly menacing voice.

Wand in hand she spun quickly and found herself face to face with not one, but twenty black cloaked and silver masked adults. Death Eaters, each one eyeing her with a relaxed confidence.

'Eep.'

Those at the back seemed to be stepping out of some kind of magical wardrobe, her eyes span to the still barricaded door and she realised it was on the far side of the cloaked figures.

Worriedly she feigned confidence "I've always been fairly decent at the subject, it's good I have next year's book already. Maybe I can study over the summer?" The Felix Felicis was still working, she could feel it urging her to display exactly how nervous she was. And her tone was very, very worried, poorly pretending aloof self-assurance.

Still, Ginny really didn't know what to do.

The man who was assumed to be the leader -as he is the one who is talking- leered blatantly at her chest, he gestured to the red and gold of her school tie as he spoke "So we have a Griffindor welcoming committee, here I was under the impression the Dark Mark had been set off ordering us reinforcements to arrive... Does big bad Dumbly-dore station sweet little girls to defend his castle now?"

Ginny didn't know what to do. She couldn't do anything. How could a girl with only a couple of years magical training, and one year under

Harry, 'this is not the time for naughty thoughts Ginny Weasley,' possibly have done anything about a score of fully trained Death Eaters. Nothing that's what, and she wanted to cry thinking about it.

"Well girl speak up, or did your mother fail to teach you proper manners? We can be very persuasive in our teaching methods I'll have you know."

'Harry, I need Harry. He will rescue me. That's what he does, that's what he's for. He rescues his girlfriend when she is in danger.'

The leader of the masked men grew impatient "Well?" and it suddenly descended on the redhead that she had it all backwards. Harry Potter, the Harry Potter, did not exist to save her, not in the least. So she was going to die, here, in this mostly forgotten room. Killed by merciless evil wizards, and there was nothing in the world she could do to stop it.

That was when Felix in her system triggered something, something deep, something buried. A rippling in her mind or her very being, it nudged something to shake loose and change. Like a kernel of toughness in her very soul, a stone granite-hard began to break, crumble to dust and dissolve, losing its never acknowledged hold on the girl. Ginny Weasley knew what to do.

'Fire'

'Yes, fire. It's always been fire.' Ginny remembered the first time she made fire happen consciously, Professor Lupin had the foresight to bring Burn Salve to that lesson, which was good because otherwise poor Colin might have had permanent scarring.

'Fire'

'Yes, I can destroy twenty pathetic little Death Eaters easily. I just need to use fire.'

With a twisted smile never before seen cross the flame haired woman's face, she conjured Fyre for the first time in her short life. She found herself laughing at their screams, as her enemies were consumed in beautiful warmth.

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As she stalked through the corridors of Hogwarts Ginny, 'kn-euw...' she drew out the word in her mind '...kn-o, not Ginny. Ginny makes me sound like a house-elf or some such thing. I will be Ginevra from now on I think, the three syllabled title suddenly seemed far more appropriate,' she was stalking about the halls of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry looking for an opponent.

It had come to her in a flash of realisation, an instant of clarity. She owed a Life Debt to Harry Potter, it was so obvious now. Her life, her being, Merlin save her, her very Soul, existed for one purpose; 'Aid Harry Potter.'

She had been wrong these past few years, thinking the man her own personal saviour, the sort right out of a Beedle Tale, 'Gods I let my mother talk me into doing that' she shuddered at the implications. No, Harry was not her private knight in shining armour. Ginevra though, she-, well she was not so much his girlfriend, as she was his property.

It was just so obvious now. And it was also obvious that Harry would want her to stop Death Eaters today, protect the school like he would, and even though the Lucky Potion wore off several minutes ago she resolved to stop Harry's enemies.

"Incendio, Chiroptera, Protego, Reducto," Spying her eldest brother was in trouble she rolled to her left snapping off a second "Reducto."

Five swift spells shouted out, one a shield barely strong enough to deflect a mass of brown aimed at impacting her. A large yellow haired man was taken in the side by the heavy blasting curse and began tossing about Unforgivables like they were candy.

Unexpectedly the redhead's attention was directed toward the stairwell she believed leads to the Astronomy Tower, and an easily recognised mass of wild raven hair descended a few moments later.

"Harry, where did you come from?" Ginevra cried, stupid question in her opinion, and fortunately there was no time for him to answer her. He put his head down and sprinted forward, narrowly avoiding a blast that erupted over his head, showering them all in bits of wall.



Harry aimed a hex from the floor at the enormous blond Death Eater who was causing most of the chaos, "Impactus!" the man gave a howl of pain as the spell hit him in the face and he wheeled around staggering.

A dispassionate part of Ginevra's mind noted the man must have shielded most of that spell somehow to even be on his feet. The large man then tried to bound away after the two other black cloaks that now were retreating, and her midnight blue eyes began to narrow in fury. 'You are not getting away from me that easily sunshine.'

She sprinted with the last of her waning strength, and flying round a corner Ginevra put as much power as she could into channelling fire once more "Incendio!" the most powerful spell she can cast conjured a ball of flame twice the size of her head and it raced toward the towering Death Eater. His hastily raised shield cracked at the onslaught of heat and the fifteen year old closed on the man, sending a trio of overpowered blasting hexes.

"Reducto, Reducto, REDUCTO!"

The last left her head swimming as it took far more magical strength from her than she had ever thought possible, but it impacted squarely on his chest taking the man's feet from under him and he hit the far wall with a dull crunch.

Stumbling toward the prone form her wand dropped from her shaking grip and she noticed the man's chest was cracked and gaping, but despite this he was still alive. 'Not for long' she thought to herself as her knuckles smash into the Death Eaters ribs, again and again ...and again.

Ginevra smiled sweetly as she locked gazes with the blonde mountain of a man, she then forcefully plowed her right hand deep into his exposed chest cavity. Squeezing, the spark of life slowly drained from his eyes as the redhead observed, still smiling. The brother and sister, -who would later turn out to be Amycus and Alecto Carrow- had long since fled by this time. They would never learn how good a decision they had made.

Several minutes and a few cleaning charms later Ginevra returned to the stairwell leading to the Astronomy Tower, and the much abused site of tonight's main battle.

"Gin, you got that damned werewolf off me with the Reductor Curse just in time. Can you even imagine what my fiancé would say if I came back all scared and broken." He said it with a cavalier grace the younger woman was well accustomed to.

"Let's face it Bill, what's Veela Aura have when stacked up against good old fashioned Weasley charm? You'd have been fine regardless."

"You're right about that one lil'spitfire."

Strangely the hated nickname from her youth did not faze the woman as it once had "Less of the little or I'll start wondering around the Burrow starkers until you beg for mercy."

With a wary nod and a strange look her oldest brother continued "You get the boy, Neville? and I'll take Flitwick. I need to keep my wand out on the off chance they come back."

"No problem. Any idea what happened tonight Bill?"

"Not a clue."

With a shrug the two made their way to the hospital wing.

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Snape had murdered Headmaster Dumbledore on top of the Astronomy Tower. That was why Harry was in such a rush to follow Death Eaters when he charged through the battle, he wanted to kill yet another of his Defence Against the Dark Arts Professors. The female Weasley didn't know the old man, having only spoken to him in passing a few times at Grimmauld Place, but she knew enough that Harry was going to need help getting through this. With her newfound understanding of the world she found herself looking at the situation completely differently than she would have only a few hours ago. So she knew that Hermione was the one who should be there for him, while he goes about not talking about it in that way he does.

This was not the worst news to come from tonight's battle however "But he had taken his Lucky Potion, I know he had." Hermione, along with Luna, was the girl Ginevra counted as her closest female friend. Don't mistake this to mean she had no friends of her own of course, she was quite popular in her year, only those others were simply school children who had never been close to this war in the same way her family had.

"Yes, he had Ms. Granger. We believe that is part of the reason why this happened." They had told the story of using a small amount of Felix Felicis to the Griffindor Head of House and she had in turn gone to Professor Slughorn for an expert opinion. In the space of ten seconds he had taken three cutting wounds, two of which were cursed with some form of purple flames, as well as two Killing Curses shot off by that blonde man Ginevra had dispatched. Who knows how many people he saved in those ten seconds, but one thing is certain; Hermione Granger would have been introduced to a big old flash of green had he not been there.

"Ron can't be dead," she wailed "he just can't be!" He was though, she'd never said it out loud but Ron had always been her favourite brother, everyone assumed it would be Bill because the two got along so well, but she and Ron had always been close growing up in the safety of the Burrow. Good times getting back at the twins and their various pranks, or summers spent annoying Percy.

He'd have liked to go down in that way, Ginevra knew this in her bones. Taking a curse and saving the girl, that's the man Ron had always aspired to be.

"What are you smiling at!" Hermione screamed in the younger girl's face, madness and grief getting to her. Locking eyes she just voiced her thoughts then stalked from the room, leaving behind her grief stricken parents, her friends, and the deceased shell that was once her favourite brother.

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'I killed a man today.'

Ginevra was alone in her bathroom in the girl's dormitory. She was inside Griffindor tower all alone, as it was very late at night. The

woman was looking down at her bloodstained hands, blood dries brown and not red when its left to dry she was mildly surprised to learn. There was far more on her right than her left, under her nails and all across her knuckles.

'I guess I killed like twenty people today, but those others don't really count do they girl?' what happened in the Room of Requirement was murky, like something done long ago or when you are half asleep. Whatever it was definitely happened, but you hardly remember it. She couldn't even begin to guess what spell was used, all she knew was that it felt like... home.

'So I killed a man, ended his life, and I did it on purpose.'

Looking into the mirror and gazing again at her reflection, the fifteen - nearly sixteen- year old was once more surprised to see her eyes had changed. Where they were once a bright chocolate brown, big and by all accounts beautiful, now however they were a deep dark blue, midnight close to black. Familiar in a way that she was not quite able to place, but one thing she knew for sure was that they were alive in a way she had never seen when looking at her own face in the mirror. There was a spark to be seen now, something she was certain was important.

'I should shower, cuts, dirt, bruises, and blood. I should definitely shower.' She stuck her thumb into her mouth then. And took a long moment to simply experience the flavour of a man whose life she had ended.

'...'

Swirling a single robe over her naked form she took off, down the stairs from the girl's dormitory. It was very late, under normal circumstances where last night didn't include a battle, or when classes were in session, this time of day would be fair game for early risers. These were not normal circumstances and so she passed through a common room completely void of students, and made her way up to the sixth years' dormitory, light on her feet from years spent stealing her brother's broomsticks in the dead of night.

Harry was not awake, although it was clear his night had been far from restful. Briefly wishing she had bothered learning that privacy spell Hermione used earlier, she decided to stick with the only one

she knew, a stripped down version of a Cone of Silence learned in O.W.L. Charms class.

Sensing someone's presence the man's green eyes snapped open and lock onto blue, after a long moment he spoke hoarsely "Ginny?"

Containing a wince at her old name she pulled her hands behind her head and dragged off the single layer of clothing "Hello Harry."

His stare never shifted from her eyes, which given his age was saying something, and he just looked into her for the longest time "Gin-" she took a kiss from him, unusual in itself as she had never before initiated the experience.

"When I leave I am not going to be a virgin anymore Harry, and I think after last night you may need this even more than I."

The man did not respond with words.

Collapsed with exhaustion but unable to sleep the woman felt she should be disgusted, she should but patently she was not. Blood of a dead man still under her nails and covering the backs of her hands, her own blood some of it from cuts and scrapes, sweat matted hair, drenched bodily fluids soaking their way into the mattress she was sprawled across. The crimson haired woman was also in quite a large amount of pain, but strangely even though most of it is bad, all of it felt so very good, so very right.

'Things are different now, everything has changed, and some of it is not awful.'

Her contemplation stilled for the longest time, floating in the absence of everything, consciously accepting oblivion.

'Today was a good day.'

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Lens of Sanity

How did I do portraying an airheaded teenage girl at the beginning? I know I kinda played up the Ginny-ness to slightly OOC levels but I did it for a good reason.

Now I'd like to note; I'm not doing a Super!Ginny, I am not doing a Soul Bond story, I am not doing a Ginny goes on the Horcrux hunt instead of Ron, and I am certainly not just doing a BK7 at Hogwarts from Ginny's perspective. Hell, I'm not even really doing a Ginny story at all as this woman's name is Ginevra, a completely different character who happens to share a similar history with the hated love-potion spiking wonderslut.

Oh, and the Horoscope was taken from some random page on the internet, and Felix Felicis is not used in battle because it increases the odds of heroic sacrifice, there has to be a reason rich people don't carry the stuff around with them, so why not.

Anyway, should you get to the end of a (now posted) ChapFour and it still sucks then fine, flame the shit out of me. I'm starting to think I deserve it.

## Chapter Two: A New Day Comes

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Ginevra woke to the light of noon and was treated to the barest fraction of a moment where thought and understanding had not yet engaged. That brief span of time where a person has no idea who or where they are. It was peaceful.

Aches and pains assaulted her senses first, some in places she had never experienced much soreness ever before. She was in her own bed in Griffindor fifth year girls dormitory, why this was worthy of note saying as she awoke here every day she did not yet know, but she noted it, and it was the unfamiliar smells which jostled their way into the forefront of her awareness.

Events of the previous twenty four hours then crash down into her mind, and some of it began to make sense. Some but far from all, she knew this too. Far too much had happened in the woman's recent history to be dealt with swiftly, but for now it was enough to know that things had changed and she was no longer the same.

Uncaring about her state of undress nor her physical condition, Ginevra extricated herself from her bedding and strode self-assuredly across the room in search of a thorough morning cleansing. Afternoon now had she bothered to check the time, which she didn't because she had only returned four and a half hours ago crashing directly into sleep.

Some time passed and she found herself dressing for the day, it was quite amusing the lengths she used to go to into deciding which outfit to wear on a morning. Piles and piles of crap adorned her personal space, little accessories she had made herself, stylised robes and personally tailored clothing. Smiling at the sight she chose something simple and carelessly tied back her freshly washed hair in a high ponytail. Looking herself over critically in the full length mirror she came to an obvious conclusion; she really was one attractive young woman. All the self delusional bullshit she used to put herself through, bah, it was nothing but insecure childishness.

'Well kiddo, today is a new day what are you going to do with yourself?'

Strangely she didn't have an overwhelming urge to seek out Harry Potter, he was alive and safe, and as of a few hours ago he was more than satiated, so today was not about him. Anymore than anything could be said to not be about Harry Potter at any rate.

Sweeping toward the seventh floor she looked over the area where, just last night, she and her friends had been fighting and dying and killing their enemies. From the discussion yesterday she knew the battle had been two for two; Albus Dumbledore and Ronald Weasley lost for Harry's side, Gibbon and Rowle for gone from Tom's ranks.

Really that was what this all came down to in her opinion, the two most significant male influences in her life duking it out over who got to be king. Clearly Ginevra never even had a doubt as to which she would stand for, yet she had made sure to learn the blonde man's name when she attained the full story of the night's events.

Thorfinn Rowle.

'I'd kill him again in a heartbeat' she thought looking at the discoloured stone of the hallway where she had seen the man last. Idly she made her way to the Come and Go Room and requested the place containing many things, hoping that seeing the room again would draw out more memories. Had she known of the existence of a Pensieve Ginevra would have gone to considerable effort to locate one, as she was incredibly curious about what actually happened here.

Hefting a bloodstained axe she traced the scorch marks left in this place, there were no bodies and even the wardrobe they had come through -which she'd been informed was in fact a Vanishing Cabinet- was gone, along with most of the row behind the thing.

'Nothing' she had no idea what had happened. "Incendio" sent a small ball of flame at a stuffed barn owl and she watched it burn slowly.

'That way took too much energy.' It was true, she'd have noticed how hard accessing her magic was last night had she not been so absorbed in everything else that was happening. "Incendio" burned a three legged stool which was of no use to anyone.



'That is something different.' She mused in her own head 'it being difficult to use cast spells is probably just magical exhaustion but the feeling there. Churning and crashing waves, it's so chaotic, I've never felt that before.'

Deciding she wasn't getting any answers standing there like an idiot, Ginevra went in search of something to eat and somewhere to think.

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"Have you seen him today Ginny?" she had barely made it to the Great Hall before lunch was over, and the food vanished about twenty seconds after she had claimed a plate of food. And she was now eating it from her knees.

"He's probably still resting, he had quite a rough night," 'and an even rougher morning,' she added silently to herself. Oddly she felt absolutely no need to blush at the idea, it was a Patronus memory if ever she'd had one. As Ginevra nibbled lightly on a cold piece of chicken she inquired, "How have you been holing up Hermione? I know you and my brother were pretty close."

Her face dropped a little but she was clearly surprised to hear such a question from the younger girl. "Not so great actually, I-, you, I should thank you for what you said though, it was completely true and I should not have yelled at you."

"It's okay, I think I know how you feel."

"It was the second time he did that you know, did he ever tell you about what happened in our first year?"

After she took a long moment Ginevra thought the question over seriously, "Tom was possessing that years Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, and Ron said you and he helped Harry prevent him from getting to a Philosopher's Stone. I don't think that is what you mean though is it Hermione?"

Hermione smiled for the first time since before Harry left last night as she said "Not quite what I meant, no." The brunette went on to explain all about Ron's intelligence and cunning when he battled against Professor McGonagall's Transfigured Chess Set, and how he decided to sacrifice himself so his friends could go on without him.

As Ginevra finished the meal her friend was well on her way through a story where her prat of a brother had marched right into the middle of an Acromantula nest on the bare hopes of finding out how to get his friend un-petrified from her Basilisk. That one was especially surprising to the redhead as her whole family knew he had such ridiculously severe arachnophobia.

She found herself quite drawn in hearing these stories first hand for a change, some of them she'd heard before of course, but of other's -like the chess match- she was quite as ignorant as any off the shelf Hogwarts student.

Taking the time to go through these things went a long way toward helping the older girl deal with her own grief as well. As a direct result of her spending the afternoon doing this, Hermione was able to truly deal with the situation once the boy's funeral was over. Otherwise she would have gotten both herself and her closest friend killed before the rest of her schoolmates had even arrived at next term's Sorting Ceremony.

Ginevra took a deep breath after a long time sat in silence "You should go make certain Harry is okay, he'll need to talk to you even if he doesn't admit it aloud." A second startled look from the seventeen year old and Ginevra answered the question which was obviously on Hermione's mind "He needs his friend, not some girl he can stick his tongue into. Go, make sure he's not blaming himself. More than he normally does anyway."

As the brunette walked off the woman sat alone and thought to herself that saying that out loud had been far more painful than she would like to admit. Nonetheless it was the right thing to do, so the woman with blood red hair made her way back to the Room on the seventh floor and solitude.

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Sat on a stone outcropping overlooking the lake in the late afternoon sunlight Harry Potter's mind was a blur, and not in a good way. A thousand different thoughts and feelings had been whirring in every direction, and dominating it all the intense weight of what he -and Hermione if she was still coming with him- were going to have to do to end this war.

It seemed impossible on the face of it, Fawkes lamentation of his fallen master underscored the sadness and loss of such a great man leaving the world. And now Harry was faced with completing a task of such importance and such scope without the aid of his mentor, nor the help of the first friend he'd had who was both his age and his species.

'We're down to two, and the school year hasn't even ended yet. If I believed in omen's I'd say that would probably be a bad one.' He knew it was selfish to think of his friend's death in such a way, but the amount of sadness a person could feel at one time was limited. He may have an emotional range to cover it but for the rage when Snivellus Snape crossed his mind. A rage which took up more than a small amount of the dark haired boy's concentration.

"Have you seen a toad, a boy named Neville has lost one" his closest friend asked while unceremoniously dropping down next to him.

He smiled a little "No sorry, do you know you have dirt on your nose?" The brunette got a similar smile but any humour dropped away swiftly and the two returned to silence. Hermione was about to speak again and he interrupted "I slept with Ginny last night... I shouldn't have done that."

Her eyes widened at the unexpected statement, but she took it in thoughtfully "She seemed different today."

"Different how?"

"I'm not sure, she sent me out here to talk to you, that's not the kind of thing I would have expected from her. You know, I would have said the big supportive girlfriend angle was right down her alley."

After a while he threw out the one thing he'd been trying not to think about all afternoon "I should break up with her."

"WHAT? You have sex with her and immediately want to break up with her. I can't believe you Harry!"

Waving his hands in protest Harry got out "That's not what I mean, it's just, we're going off on our mission as soon as I finish visiting the

Dursley's one last time, and I'm going to be leaving her behind. We can't take her with us, and it's too dangerous on her if everyone knows she's my girlfriend." Mollified a little by his reasoning Hermione calmed down slightly "That is if you are still coming Hermione?"

'I can't believe how hopeful and desperate I sound,' he despairingly noted when he thought it 'I should be trying to convince her to let me go on alone.'

Looking at her friend she wearily answered "Yes Harry I am still coming with you. I suggest you think about the Ginny situation over the summer though, you're coming to the Burrow for Bill and Fleur's wedding before we leave, so you can break up or not break up with her then." A long time after his assent was spent in contemplation, and finally she dragged her friend to his feet "Come on, I'll bet anything you've not eaten since yesterday."

"Okay. Thanks for coming out her Hermione."

She just nodded, there would be time for smiling later.

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Dropping exhausted into a tattered Victorian style chair Ginevra let out a long breath. She was in her new room of choice at Hogwarts School, the cathedral sized one with the mountains of rubbish and the occasional treasure. It had been barely a week since the battle, her magic was still in turmoil, and it was still weak from overuse. Nevertheless she was capable of some spells so long as she didn't push herself too hard. The second day following the fight was enough to dissuade her from trying that again, losing consciousness on the hard stone floor of this very room until three o'clock in the morning was not a pleasant experience.

'Though how I used the rest of that night may have made up for it' she thought wryly.

Ginevra had been spending her days with Harry, Hermione, Luna, and Neville once he got out of the Hospital Wing. They didn't really talk that much about things which were important. This was mostly by unvoiced consensus as it was clear to everyone that things were

going to get worse, and they all just want to enjoy what calm there was before the storms.

She'd been spending her nights in the boy's dormitory even though she knew the man was feeling quite a bit of guilt once the morning rolled around. 'Honestly it's not as if I don't know he's leaving.' The rest of her time was spent in solitude pouring over her new favourite book, this Half Blood Prince character was clearly a bit dodgy but some of the annotations were fascinating to the girl.

That and work on her other plan. Well, calling it a plan would be a bit pretentious, a vague idea with some tendrils of possibility in the near future. A sort-of plan was close enough for now though, she would have most of the summer to work on an actual plan.

She'd been creating her very own pile of junk in the room, working through the stuff she thought might be salvageable and getting it all in one place. She had collected half a dozen swords, three axes, loads of reparable furniture, various other broken amulets, jewellery and the like. She'd found something made from what she believed was solid gold and had a founder's insignia on it, -a Ravenclaw Raven- it was just a shame the thing looked like it had been scorched into worthlessness during her hazily remembered fight in the place.

It hadn't been easy but Ginevra had managed to make contact with Sirius' friend from the Order of the Phoenix, Mundungus Fletcher. Not many teenage girls hung out at the Hog's Head, but sitting at the bar sipping a heavy shot of Ogden's Old with a 'fuck you' scowl on one's face will get you peace and quiet. She was there more than three hours pondering on the overcapacity town of Hogsmeade before the opportunity presented itself, 'really when you are paying attention, all it takes is time.' So now she had an agreement with the old criminal for the day of the Headmaster's funeral.

That was why she was in the Room of Requirement, fighting back a magical exhaustion headache and reading the Prince's book until she felt recovered enough to continue. That damned axe took the longest, as it was resistant to the three cleaning charms she knew, so getting all the blood off and sharpening the thing took a full ninety bloody minutes. On detailed inspection she doubted whatever was killed with the blade was human, but that hardly mattered when you're chipping away at the red-brown stain with measured

bludgeoning hexes for what your headache was telling you was an eternity.

Closing the textbook she staggered back to her feet, flicking off her newly researched spell she aimed at some heavy pieces of broken wood, the woman precisely intoned three syllables; 'Repexis.' Her limited magic drained painfully but when the spell completed, the expensive appearing furniture looked closer to the way it presumably once had.

'Urg, okay what's next?'

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"Ah, William Arthur Weasley how nice of you to join the two of us this evening" why she'd decided to go for grandiose tones when talking to her brother she couldn't begin to guess "Did you know that your second daughter is to be named Dominique after your beautiful fiancé's maternal aunt? Dominique Ginevra Weasley has such a commanding air to it, do you not think?"

A comedic look perfectly described as 'deer in the headlights' graced the features of the eldest Weasley brother, as his sister and future wife shared identical predatory smiles. Ginevra found this connection a strange one, recently she was calling this French woman phlegm hoping that putting her down would make herself look good. On reminiscing about her childish behaviour she was amused that it just made her look pathetic, and outlined the former champion's attributes rather than detracted from them.

The two women separated requiring Bill to sit in the only seat available, directly between the females. Who then spent the entire meal torturing the poor outgunned Curse Breaker.

"Really brother, you should take a second helping. I have no desire to be the one responsible for your running short on energy some time later tonight." There really wasn't much innocence in the sentiment bar the tone, but Bill couldn't retaliate without exposing himself to the Veela girl.

Thinking as she took up the challenge Fleur added "Oui, the fish especially is good, and has all the right kinds of calories."

It was nice to get away from the morbid atmosphere for a while and engage in some levity with a woman she may one day call a friend. 'Bill has always had good taste, and the impression she gives off when I am actually giving her a chance is quite positive. Why in heavens name I've ever listened to my mother I will never know.'

As the meal went on Bill became quieter and quieter with the constant routings the two women were visiting upon him. He would be able to hold his own, and even get in a few hits if it was one or the other, but together he had been quite thoroughly dealt with, and was even tinged red with embarrassment. 'Oh my gods, I never even thought Bill could blush at all!'

The soon to be married couple left for what was clearly going to be a very sweaty experience to anyone who knew the signs, and Ginevra once more found herself alone, dwelling on less happy thoughts.

"-found something out this morning, in the library..." Harry, who was about to sit next to Gin gave a meaningful look to her other friend.

"N-, no, not that." She seemed nervous that the redhead was going to enquire, but when she simply reached for a drink Hermione went on "It's about, erm, Snape."

A dark look crossed the jade eyed boy's face as it always did at mention of the man's name "What about him?"

"Well, it's just that I was sort of right about the Half Blood Prince business," she said tentatively, and the flame haired woman's attention snapped fully on their conversation.

Bitterly he responded "Do you have to rub it in, Hermione? How do you think I feel about that now?"

"No, no. Harry, I didn't mean it like that" she said hastily casting a familiar privacy charm, looking around to check that they were not being overheard. "It's just that I was right about Eileen Prince once owning the book. You see, she was Snape's mother. I found a tiny announcement about Eileen Prince marrying a man called Tobias Snape."

"The Half Blood Prince is Snape?" Ginevra roared once she heard confirmation from that last statement.

A deafening quiet answered this explosion "...why does that matter to you Gin?"

As she took in both her companions she said "Watch, 'Muffliato'" and spread the privacy charm around the group a second time.

"You could have learned that from me the night of the Battle" the bushy haired girl remarked pedantically.

"Fine..." casting about Ginevra scoped a third year Ravenclaw she didn't even know 'Levicorpus.'

"Eep" the boy squeaked as he was unceremoniously yanked into the air, 'Libracorpus' and he fell to the floor with a crash. Unabashedly turning back to her shocked friends she stated "See?"

"See? Yes I saw, but what do you mean?" shaking her head Ginevra rummaged about in her satchel, eventually she pulled out a clean covered book with tatty pages annotated by the Half Blood Prince.

Laying the thing down on the table she went on "I found it in the Room of Requirement when I was under the influence of the Felix Felicis."

Harry chuffed a laugh "I hid it there about two months ago after I hit Malfoy with that Dark Slicing Curse, whose purpose I didn't know at the time by the way."

There was something wrong with that statement but the blue eyed woman was too preoccupied to think on it. "There is some good stuff in here, even if it was written by Snape of all people."

Harry was about to comment when his eyes bulged and he choked silently. "There was this crown thing I used to mark the book's location wasn't there?"

Frowning in thought she landed on what he was getting at, "Yeah, it had a Raven on it why?" The two shared one of their 'Golden Trio' looks and Ginevra rolled her eyes. Together they both sprang to their feet as she commented "It was destroyed in a fight with Death Eaters, only half the thing is left so there is no point in going after it... May I ask why this is important?"



Another shared glance, a whole world of silent communication passes between them in the way of long time friends, and she understood.

"I guess not."

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In Ginevra's opinion only one good thing came from the morning of Dumbledore's Funeral, as most of it was bad. There was a chorus of merpeople, centaurs, and all the distinguished guests one would expect to see at an event which marked the passing of such a notable figure. The desire to harm a number of the attendants was strong in Harry, and she would be beside him if he chose to start casting at Deloris Umbridge or Rita Skeeter. The first for causing the scars on Harry's hand advising not to tell lies, for that alone there would be a reckoning. The second for no personal reason -Ms. Skeeter having never written anything bad about her- but she would be there beside Harry regardless, should he decide on that course.

Clutching that locket he had become so attached to since the night of the old man's death, Harry did eventually break down, and she was there for him. No tears of her own as it did not seem fitting, her brother's memorial service scheduled a few days ago gave Ginevra ample time to grieve for what she had lost. On this day there was sadness but no tears, Harry needed her and so she did what she could, and she knew now that she would do the same always.

The two eventually tried to make their way to Hogsmeade and the Express, leaning heavily on one another as the limping Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour blocked their path. Even though the man was a former Auror, and one who carried a lot of political weight, the redhead would have to admit she had not immediately rejected the idea of attempting a Blasting Hex to the face. The man was clearly trying to catch Harry in a weak moment, and that was something she would not stand for.

It was of course completely unnecessary, the dark haired boy managed to calmly infuriate the Minister without trying, or even raising his voice. She remembered thinking 'well what's one more adversary when we're dealing with this many problems already,' as

they'd turned their backs on him and strode away leaving the shaggy haired politician in their dust.

On the path toward the easily recognizable Hogwarts train - Hermione and Luna followed behind helping steady a still injured Neville Longbottom- she'd heard from Harry the one good thing which brought a smile to both of their faces. Something which, for whatever reason, hadn't come out when telling the story of what had happened on the night of the Death Eater attack. Snape, who the redhead was beginning to think Harry hated more than Tom, did not get out of that battle scot free.

As he escorted the dismal excuse of a human being that was the Scion of Malfoy from Hogwarts grounds, Snape had a bit of a run in with a ...displeased was a good word, a displeased Harry Potter. From the sounds of things it was going quite well for the former Potions Professor, effortlessly slapping away Harry's spells, taunting him and so forth. When a Hippogriff, the same one which used to live in the mistress' room at Grimmauld Place, came to Harry's aid; 'Sectumsempra' and the greasy man found himself short two fingers on his left hand.

It was a start, and Harry was going to win this war, piece by piece if needs be.

Of that Ginevra was certain.

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"Of course I fucking don't! I trust you exactly as far as I could spit you" the crimson haired woman exploded at the rumpled man's ridiculous question.

"Whey Ginny girl, I don' kno' where you get such language. An' as you say, I was great pal's with Sirius. I wouldn' try an' do anythin' to ya that were dishonest."

Shaking her head at the thief she just said "Stay here, give me the damn sack and I'll be back in half an hour." An order which the man eventually obeyed, handing the magically reinforced and expanded sack to the teenage girl, who then took off to a secret passageway under Honeydukes she'd learned in fourth year from her trickster brother Fred.

Nearly a full hour passed before she returned to the private room in the Hogs Head. Apparently the man had gotten back in the good graces of the elderly barkeep because last she'd heard he was banned, and Ginevra threw down the suspiciously light sack then stated "I've appraised most of it, so don't try to pull a fast one on me Mundungus."

Frowning because he was sure a pretty little girl like her would have been an easy mark the man went to work with what was clearly a professional level of competence. It was a sight which few would've expected from the scruffy, foul smelling man.

After he closely inspected each item taken from the Room-Of-Hidden-Things for three hours, -Gin having long since gone back to her Potions book while keeping one eye on the thief- he declared "Fifteen Galleons for the lot."

Barking a laugh as she tore her eyes from the pages she countered "Quite amusing Mundungus; Ninety, half up front and that's only because I like you."

"That Windsor was hardly worth carting here, and you gotta be kidding me half up front; Twenty and al give ya four now."

"That's an antique you idiot, a classic early-nineteenth century I checked, probably one of the most valuable things here."

They bartered back and forth for the longest time, with the girl beginning guess he'd seen something she'd missed but would never be able to figure out what. "Fine; Forty-four with fourteen now, but I want the sack too."

"Whud you wan' the sack for?" as she was clearly not going to answer he just said "Alrigh', you'd get a guy to sell 'is own grandmother for under the odds you would."

Ginevra for some reason took this as an honest compliment, and she beamed as she requested "will you side-along me to Kings Cross Dung? I need to pretend I have been on the train the whole time."

At four o'clock in the evening, not long before the Express was due to arrive Ginevra found herself on the muggle side of King's Cross, lounging arrogantly against one of the platforms waiting for a very specific group of people to make an appearance. Following a short wait they did; pudgy, pudgier, and horse-face. The young woman gave them a few moments to find somewhere to stand.

Leaping to her feet, robes swirling at the effort she advanced on the Dursley family. Slashing a shallow gash across the back of the fat man's knuckles, eventually placing the razor sharp cooking utensil edge on to the fat man's neck, "Do I have your attention Mr. Dursley?" she whispered barely audibly. At a tiny nod from the man Ginevra continued, "I am not particularly interested in being nice about this, pretending like this is a request for instance... Stay out of his way, he will be out of your home by the day following the anniversary of his birth, stay away or I will find you and cut your head from your shoulders. Understand?"

It wasn't much, but she hoped Harry would appreciate the gesture.

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### Lens of Sanity

Well I'm attempting to write a more standard fic, instead of racing through the story like I normally do I'm taking my time, keeping chapters the same length but not cramming three or four chapters worth of content all into one. Hell, by ten thousand words in one of my stories I had gone from the Basilisk fight in second year, all the way through to the end of the First Task in fourth.

### Chapter Three: Aint Nothing but a Summer Jam

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Ginevra had managed to sidestep pretty much all of the questions regarding her whereabouts on the Hogwarts Express by virtue of telling one group of friends she was with the other. She dragged Harry into a secluded corner for a chased goodbye he would hopefully remember fondly, the woman had then disengaged and after a few more words of farewell parted with the rest of her family.

'Ah, The Burrow once again' she thought as she took in the smell of the summer air, the look of the untidy garden, and the soft sounds of garden gnomes as they uttered swear words the twins had taught them. In short a very familiar location, the treasured place she had grown up as a child.

Her mother began to prepare a hasty meal which Ginevra was looking forward to having eaten little that day, with the exception of what passed for food at the Hog's Head. Sprawling out on the couch she looked over to her eldest brother "Why were you and Fleur spending so much time in Hogwarts at the end of the term Bill?"

A grim smile passed over him as he answered "With Dumbledore gone we were reorganising the Order, and with mum and Ron-, well it seemed like the best thing to do to help keep an eye on things."

To the sounds of cooking she mused 'Mum really didn't take losing one of her children very well' and a long quiet descended on the two as they became lost in their own thoughts. "How does the Ministry track underage magic, do you know?"

"What are you thinking Gin?" he asked suspiciously.

"Just curious, do you know or not?"

"Yeah, if you buy a new wand from Diagon Alley it has a tracker on it to help them trace wand-signature, but if you're in a high magical area like Platform Nine and Three Quarters it'll be lost in all the ambient energy."

Grinning the girl asked "Okay but I'm using Gramma Weasley's old wand so there will be no tracker on it right?"

"True but you still can't do underage magic with it because you still have the Trace on you. Just like everyone else who goes to Hogwarts, they put it on you on the first day of class. If you were home schooled the Ministry would have added the Trace when they made you register." This deflated the younger girl's enthusiasm a bit.

"So there is no way past it? That can't be right, I know some people in school improve loads over the summer, so there must be something otherwise how could they practice?"

"To be honest I don't really know how the Trace actually works, but if I had to guess I'd say that it just makes it easier for them to pin you down in muggle areas. It wouldn't be something complex enough to track what spells you're using, that would be far too complicated and way too easy for regular people to Curse Break their way through it." His eyes lit up a little as he thought about his passion and Ginevra shook her head at his antics.

"So you're saying you could lift the Trace from me, but there is no need because if I practice around, say a magical families home for instance, and I stick to using my Grandmother's wand, the Ministry won't be able to catch me."

"Pretty much yeah, what are you thinking lil'spitfire?" he said chuckling.

As their mother called them in for an early meal the blue eyed woman said "I think it's about time you teach me some good Curse Breaker ways to blow shit up."

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'Fuck me with a spiked club would you look at this place' the fifteen year old thought as her gaze shifted about her first floor bedroom. With new eyes it was like she'd never seen the inside of it before, a small space really, but being the only girl among a swarm of brothers meant she didn't have to share, but gods in heaven was everything bright. "And Pink!" she stated aloud shuddering.

A poster of the Wizarding band the Weird Sisters was one thing, Donaghan Temlett on bass was pretty talented and if what her dorm

mate had told her was true, the man played for a muggle band called 'Pulp' of all things.

At least it wasn't pink.

The captain of the all witch Quidditch team the Holyhead Harpies, Gwenog Jones was taking up the whole of the north wall also. And as she was actually looking pretty hot it must have been taken before Jones took that Bludger in the face last season. But the rest was pink, very pink. And the Unicorn stencils.

"No-one can ever be allowed to see this room."

Green went well with red hair so she set about the room with her wand changing everything pink into a nice neutral green, the shade of spring grass or dark moss. 'What was I thinking, Pink? Everyone knows pink is hideous for redheads, at least my hair is actually red not ginger like the twins, that would be even more unforgivable!'

The familiar feeling of churning chaos assaulted her senses as she went about channelling magic, thinking on the why of this increasingly familiar sensation had brought nothing but questions and no answers. All she knew was that ever since she used the Lucky Potion she'd had the feeling of swimming in the sea when there was a large storm happening, it was less personally violent than that but as far as describing a sensation went, the metaphor was not too bad.

It wasn't long before the memorable pull of magical exhaustion started digging at her and she decided to stop, 'Perhaps I will be able to answer some of my questions once I recover more magically, at least the room is looking better than it had.' Not even bothering to change Ginevra crashed onto her childhood bed and was instantly embraced by the comforting arms of Morpheus.

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'Ah, Privet Drive once again' Harry thought as he took in the smell of old musty air in his tiny room, the look of bedding bare of pillowcases, and the soft sounds of ...nothing. The unnatural stillness of a house disinfected into lifelessness. In short a very familiar location, the hated place he had grown up as a child.

"How in the name of Merlin did I grow up here without becoming a Dark Wizard?" he asked the Ether, actually half hoping his question would be answered. He shook his head as he finished the thought "Honestly, baby Voldemort lived in better conditions than these as a child."

The perverse nature of his life was not lost on him, he was standing in a tiny room inside a moderately sized house situated in a sleepy suburban hell hole, and he was unable to do magic for the next four weeks because he was still under seventeen. For most people his age this wouldn't have been all that bad. Just under a month and he'd be an adult, free to leave and do... whatever they wanted to really, Harry had never once thought that far ahead in all of his life.

No Harry had a job to do, not one which was that hard really when you come right down to it; 'Destroy the immortality of the most powerful Dark Lord in modern times, then kill him. Somehow.' That last weighed down heavily on the boy whenever he thought on it; somehow. He had not the foggiest idea of how he was going to go about it, and with his mentor recently called to play out his 'next great adventure' Harry found himself more than a little overwhelmed by the prospect.

The returning to immortality part was not all that bad, he at least had a few places to start. He'd been told over the course of the year about Horcruxes, and was armed with enough knowledge about his foe to make some educated guesses as to their locations, 'and I have Hermione still, she'll be able to come up with all sorts of ideas. She's brilliant like that' he thought while hoping for a smile.

It was the seemingly inevitable encounter with the final piece of Voldemort's Soul, the near insignificant sliver left walking around in its snake like body causing chaos and ending life. It was destroying that part which was weighing most heavily on Harry. "The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord," he spoke aloud into the artificial quiet.

It was similar to that movie Dudley had been watching over and over again during the summer before his third year. There was this time travelling robotic killing machine, and it was trying to take out this twelve year old kid, because the twelve year old would one day grow up to be 'the last best hope of humankind.' If you wanted Harry's opinion as to what it would feel like to be that character, he'd be able



to give a pretty detailed answer. Only for Harry it was worse, because the world didn't need saving at some indistinct time long in the future, after much training and preparation. No, when you were Harry James Potter you had to go save everybody now. With hardly any help, and no idea as to what the hell you were supposed to do.

A traitorous thought lanced its way through the boy's mind as he took a seat on the stained bedding, 'I wish Gin was here.'

Wishing ones girlfriend was there wouldn't under normal circumstances be a bad thing, however Harry knew deep in his bones that he had been using the pretty redhead to avoid all of his problems. When he lost himself in blissful oblivion it was almost like the trials ahead of him were unimportant, but when it would be over. And every time he felt as though he'd taken something precious from the girl.

So he pushed his attention to more important things, a set of books entitled 'Practical Defensive Magic and its Use Against the Dark Arts,' given to him for Christmas during his fifth year by Remus Lupin and his fallen godfather Sirius Black. Although he was up to the eighth and penultimate volume he'd stopped reading them after Sirius died, which now seemed to have been a grave mistake.

The books had superb, moving colour illustrations of all the counterjinxes and hexes described, and though he was unable to actively practice the magic itself Harry resolved to become as ready as possible while in the solitude of his childhood home. For whatever reason it occurred to the raven haired sixteen year old that, had his friend not recently lost his life, this war would not have felt so close as it did. And so Harry would have doubtlessly done far less productive things this his month alone.

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Ginevra woke not long before four in the morning surprisingly well rested from her early night, and immediately got on with dressing. Following a well travelled path down the single flight of stairs, careful not to step on any squeaky floorboards she made it out the front door of the sleeping Burrow without making a sound. There was a long trek down the dirt path and out from under her family wards before she could lift her wand and incant two lone syllable "Lumos"

and after a loud bang she was greeted with what was clearly a scripted spiel.

"Welcome to the Knight Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard. Just stick out your wand hand, step on board and we can take you anywhere you want to go. My name is Mike Monkfish, and I will be your conductor this evening." Shaking her head she handed over a ruinous Eleven Sickles which the gormless man had extorted from her, and she found herself hurtling off toward Kings Cross.

Finally letting her off about thirty minutes later Ginevra set off at a brisk jog toward her destination, although she was forced to Confound two idiotic muggle law enforcers who thought someone running in the dead of night had to be a criminal, 'fools.' She finally closed on Number Twelve Grimmauld Place a little sweaty from exertion, but this was the only path she knew. Ginevra had walked this way at the beginning of her fourth year and it was the only way she knew to reach the building, having floo travelled all but a handful of the times she'd gone to the building.

A long, shrill, and bellowing conversation over dinner the previous evening between her mother and father had given her the idea to come here. Channelling a classic Prewett temper her mother had been loudly arguing for relocation under the wards and protections of this Ancient Noble House. While the Order of the Phoenix had put many Jinxes specifically defending against Severus Snape, they had been unable to locate the Fidelius Anchor, and so Professor Flitwick had told the Order that he was equally unable to place the Charm on a building which was already covered by one. Not to mention that he did not have the permission to do so from the building's rightful owner, which was apparently a requisite of the Charm's magic.

The upshot being that the House of Black either was, or was not, one of the most secure locations in Great Britain for anyone opposing Tom's Death Eaters. The Order of the Phoenix predictably and sensibly, abandoned the property the morning after Albus Dumbledore had died.

As Ginevra closed the door behind her the old-fashioned gas lamps sprang into life, casting flickering light along the length of the hallway. It looked pretty much the same as she remembered. It was still eerie and cobweb filled, with house-elf heads on the wall throwing odd

shadows up the staircase. Long dark curtains concealed the portrait of Sirius' infamous mother Walburga Black, and the cursed Troll's leg umbrella stand was lying on its side as if Tonks had just knocked it over again.

"Severus Snape?" the disembodied voice of Professor Moody rang out into the quiet, which signalled the first of the Order's protections.

"Do you think Severus Snape has a body this hot?" she demanded belligerently, and something whooshed over her like cold air. Her talented tongue curled backward on itself, making it impossible to speak. Before she had time to feel inside her mouth her tongue had unravelled, and she slowly came to the conclusion that this would probably prevent any Secret Keeper from revealing the Secret. 'Clever.'

Eventually Gin landed on the fact that she was meant to be informing the ghostly Headmaster that she had not in fact been the one who killed him, and so a suitably disturbed redhead then made her way to the Black Library, and her late night destination. By the time she arrived the woman checked with a 'Tempus' spell and found it to be a little under ten minutes to five in the morning, meaning she had around an hour before she would be forced to call the Knight Bus back to Devon and her family home.

"Best get to it then Ginevra, you need to improve or you will be useless to him."

Around forty minutes later rooting around for more magic of the darker sort she'd collected a fair pile of interesting tomes, including 'The Magick in Bloode by Marius Carrow' which Ginevra had wanted to read ever since she heard about it when doing research for a piece of fourth year History homework. Turning to leave her robes caught on a bookshelf and with a tearing crack the stack gave way. As she extricated herself from splinted wood and scattered pages she noticed a false back behind the shelf she had for the most part ignored, and investigating found something very, very interesting.

"That might be just the thing I'm looking for."

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It had been three weeks since returning to Privet Drive and the Dursley family had been unusually quiet for the most part. Even Dudley appeared to be taking a crack at helpfulness, which Harry would have considered bizarre in the extreme had he been thinking on it. As he took a break from his studies Harry once again decided to read the memorial to Albus Dumbledore, an article which had surprised him in more ways than one. Mostly though Harry was shocked at the realisation that the old Headmaster had a life of his own outside of Harry's awareness, and that he'd hardly known the man at all.

The Elphias Doge character who wrote it seemed to Harry to be pandering to the old man unfortunately, and he would be disappointed at confirmation in the form of Rita Skeeter's sensationalist book when he read about it the following week. He hadn't really been able to put his finger on why the memorial article had shook him so, taken in the abstract Harry knew Dumbledore must have had loads to tell him had he lived long enough. Advice as to how he'd defeated his Dark Lord in the forties for instance, would have been top of the Headmasters priorities Harry was sure.

Still, Harry had put reflecting on the Horcrux collecting mission to the back burner. He had been spending his days taking notes and coming up with ideas as to how he was going to become stronger. It hadn't taken more than a few hours that second day when he'd taken the time to write down every spell he knew and everything he could perform with competence, for Harry to conclude that he was woefully unprepared.

Compared to the average Dumbledore's Army member from his fifth year illegal student organisation, Harry was considerably more able to defend himself. This was mostly thanks to Snape unfortunately; the gods damned Half Blood Prince had equipped him with the kind of spell knowledge which would make another Department of Mysteries Battle a far more deadly affair. And if it ever came to that, most of the blood spilled would be on the side of the Death Eaters, 'it's so bloody obvious now. They were under orders to use non-lethal magic, so we should have been trying to hurt them without worrying overmuch about ourselves.'

Having gotten all the way through 'Practical Defensive Magic' Harry had discovered a few things, one of which was the realisation that only the first three books covered things needed to pass N.E.W.T.

Defence against the Dark Arts. The first book being around O.W.L. standard and the second and third made for British seventh year level. As the Christmas present was a nine book series this meant that he had a resource which was far more helpful than he'd previously believed, and Harry was beginning to suspect the final two were on a Ministry restricted list.

Two of the more challenging pieces of magic he had found and resolved to learn were things he had seen employed with his own eyes. Used by Voldemort and Dumbledore during their clash at the end of fifth year. One was the highest level shield the texts outlined, which conjured a shining silver disc of magic out of thin air. He had seen Voldemort utilise it to deflect the force of Dumbledore's spellfire, with no visible damage to the shield bar an impact which caused a deep gong-like note to reverberate throughout the Ministry Atrium.

The incantation was 'Aegis Contego' and it had disturbingly complex wand motions which Harry had been practicing at agonising slowness with a mechanical pencil, his finger, and even a stick of celery taken from the healthy section of his Aunt Petunia's fridge.

The second he had recognised was a binding spell, sort of like 'Incarcerous' only several orders of magnitude more powerful and more difficult to cast. He had seen Dumbledore use it in an attempt to trap the Dark Lord during the same duel and had incorrectly assumed the thing a pale green fire whip.

He drew back his pencil and waved it as though brandishing a whip, imagining a long thin flame flying from the tip and wrapping pale green around an opponent he incanted 'Evinxi Necto.'

Harry sighed as he stated to himself "This would be so much easier if I could actually try it with my wand."

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As she skulked in a shadowed corner alongside Borgin and Burkes in Knockturn Alley, Ginevra wiping Hag blood from her hand thought back over the last three weeks. The black leather bound book without title she had found in the Grimmauld Place library had exactly the thing she needed to solve her problem. It was clearly very old, the original script was in old English and so was

infuriatingly difficult to read. However the interesting part was a modified version of one of the rituals annotated in what was clearly a feminine hand, far more modern given the word selection and the redhead hoped it was as effective as whoever quilled it claimed.

She had still not heard from Mundungus Fletcher about the thirty Galleons the man owed her, so she had been forced to stretch what she had for the needed supplies. Attaining enough powdered Graphorn horn for the triskaidecagram -which she had recently learned was the name of a shape which was a combination of a pentagram and a thirteen sided star- had cost her what she would recently have thought of as an insane amount of gold, leaving her quite literally Knutless.

Both the original and the annotated versions of the Ritual had advised on ground Chimaera bone or better, only she couldn't afford it and the dodgy looking woman who presumably owned the Apothecary had been muttering about having purchased too much Graphorn, so Ginevra counted herself lucky to get so much so cheap. Besides, if she understood the process as well as she thought she did, any magically reactive substance should work reasonably well.

The two sets of linked Runes she had to carve by her own hand had probably taken the longest time, five in what she recognised from her O.W.L. Ancient Runes class as Phoenician were from the older version, and eight she would tentatively conclude were Egyptian based solely on what she had seen sneaking her eldest brother Bill's Curse Breaker notes.

Neither the outline in Graphorn horn, nor the linked Runes were the active ingredient in the Ceremony she had settled on, and from information gleaned collecting the first nine, she found herself staking out a building in Knockturn Alley named Moribund's on a chilly Saturday in July. A place which she liked to think of as a Pub, so as not to think too much on what was actually going on behind the constantly locked door.

Downing the inverse version of an Aging Potion the fifteen year old shrank down to a little over four feet in height, her limbs became thin, and her face lost its adult cast gaining an embarrassing amount of baby fat. 'That was the last of the Potion, and tonight is my last chance. Better get this right first time girl.'

Thumb in her mouth the preteen girl was dragging along a childhood teddy bear once owed by her friend Luna and she worriedly asked "Have any of you seen my mummy?"

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Ginevra finished slowly transfiguring the last figure into the smallest human to animal transfiguration she could accomplish, the shape of a large sleeping dog. She then slipping it into her sack and heard a gruff voice behind her bellow "what are you doing out here little girl?"

Swiftly she concealed the razor sharp butcher knife behind the Harry Potter teddy bear, Ginevra put on as convincing an air of sweetness as she could manage "My daddy said to wait at the Leaky Cauldron, but a wan'ed go for a 'venture." The man actually appeared legitimately concerned for the child and so the girl went on "Can ya help carry ma bag mister, its eva so heavy an' a should be gettin' back now." She looked down at her feet and tried for the image of a precocious girl caught in mischief.

As he took the surprisingly light bag the man said "It is dangerous to be out by yourself these days, do not wander away from your father again without telling him." The man kept up the lecture until they were back at the Cauldron and the young girl said that she would go back to her rooms and think about what she had done.

When she arrived the front room of 12 Grimmauld Place an hour and a half later, the innate magic of all five men had transfigured them back into human shape. Although they were still heavily unconscious thanks to her reapplying 'Stupify' every twenty or so minutes.

As Ginevra entered at the meticulously prepared basement room she carelessly tossed the sack into a corner and strolled over to a chained man who despairingly wailed "Are you going to let me go then, I told you what you wanted to know didn't I?"

"Yes Mr. Rosier I am a woman of my word. Unlike Tom and his pathetic fools, I am one of the good guys. Once you sign this parchment and drink the potion you will wake up in some alleyway in London safe and sound."

"You never said I had to sign anything" the man protested desperately.

As she looked at him with blue eyes chiselled from ice she said "It will be a warning. The new Forget-For-Now Potion I overheard my Professor talking about will remove the memory, however a man like Tom would destroy your mind with Legilimency in order to break through to find out what was blocked. I simply wish you to write yourself a missive, one warning against letting on that you have been Obliviated." The man eagerly obeyed and would wake to find himself in a rubbish bin outside an Indian Restaurant, terrifying message in his own hand, and in his own blood pinned to his chest.

The Full Moon would rise on Sunday July 20th 1997 at 3:22am precisely, and Ginevra spent the remainder of the evening setting up her Ritual. She had been running out of time and had offered one of the captured Death Eaters the opportunity for freedom if they would assist her in finding the final five ingredients.

A Mister Alphard Rosier, younger brother to a deceased Death Eater, had taken the girl up on her offer and sold out the location. A brothel which employed not only pollys, as was surprisingly common in the Wizarding world, but young muggle children of both genders also. Apparently it had become quite popular to have a bit of authenticity in recent years. Despite what she claimed, Ginevra would not have let him go if not for the obvious revulsion on the man's face when describing the place.

Not that she considered herself at all an expert on the subject, but the redhead thought that she understood what was written in the book bound in black leather. Ceremonial Magic was about personal sacrifice, the Graphorn powder, runes and so on were necessary for the magic to work, but she would need to personally give something up in order for it to be successful.

She had found two Rituals in the tome that she wished to perform, the second was a method to resist extreme temperatures but would necessitate her accepting a weakness in resisting cold. She liked that idea as fire had always been special to her, and she did not want to be harmed by it. Although she would have to wait until Dung gave her the gold he owed before she could buy the necessary ingredients to perform the thing.



There was quite a steep price to be paid for attempting this Ritual however, and although Ginevra was loathed to accept it she would do so anyway. 'Harry needs help, and I will do what I must' the woman thought resolutely.

The benefit here was quite coveted, a method by which a person may become more magically powerful and a strengthening of one's core. The eleven wizards and two witches she had collected over the last week and a half would be kept alive until their magic was totally drained from them, at which point they would die. Ginevra's core would be unceasingly assaulted by their magic day and night until all thirteen keel-over dead. She would be kept conscious during the process 'riding the knife edge in hurricane force winds' if the book was to be believed.

With an Athamé in each hand she dug the two points into the opposite forearm, right on the stroke of a Full Moon's rise.

Then she began to scream.

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## Chapter Four: How Far Would You Go

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"Okay girl, do you understand what I want you to do?" Harry's Snowy Owl Hedwig nipped him affectionately as she bobbed her head in an affirmative gesture before flying out the window and out of sight. It was a desperate gesture Harry knew, but it was all he could think of to try from such a limited location. The idea being that Hedwig was by far the smartest Owl the dark haired teen had ever known, and that even though others had doubtlessly tried it with other messenger birds, Hedwig would be more effective than any of them would.

It was the 27th of July and a letter informing the boy of imminent release from his yearly cell did not bring with it happy news. This was due entirely to the fact that his girlfriend Gin Weasley had gone missing seven days ago and no-one had known what had happened to her. If the letter was to be believed she had ate an early dinner and gone to her room to sleep, then the next morning had simply not been there. No trace of struggle, no missing clothes, and her wand was still on the bedside table. She was just not there.

This had Harry far too worried to be overly concerned about the sensational nature of Rita Skeeter's newest article, which up until opening the newest missive had consumed his thoughts. He had decided on sending his faithful Owl on the bare hope that she could find her. As Hedwig hadn't simply flown in a wide circle and returned Harry was at least a little hopeful that it might help.

Failing to put his worry aside Harry went back to mechanically packing the rest of his surprisingly scant belongings. 'Aren't I supposed to be rich? I should have more to my name than two inherited magical items, a fake locket Horcrux, and the detritus of six years failed schooling.' Violently slinging a 'Potter Stinks' badge into the waste bin he thought that even though Draco wanted to be on that Astronomy Tower just as little as Harry had, he'd still like to shove one of those damned badges up the blonde ponce's arse.

Finishing up he looked around the bare pathetic room and was glad to be shot of the place. Harry sat thinking about the missing redhead in silence for a while and he eventually heard "Boy!" the familiar bawling shout of his uncle. This had not been an entirely unusual

event over the past few days, however Harry had gotten the distinct impression the waste of a man was holding back most of his ire for one reason or another.

Once again the fat man had decided he and his family were not moving out like the Order had advised them. This time he had come to the conclusion that Harry wanted to use 'some hocus pocus' to steal his precious home from him while away, which Harry found outlandish in the extreme given his obvious feeling for the place. Remembering back to his thoughts earlier in the day he reached for his pouch and spilled the contents onto the table in the front room he had been sitting.

"What do you think you are doing boy, what is all that?"

As the sixteen year old locked jade eyes on his relative, the man saw something terrifying there he would never have expected "It is gold, as you can well see with your own eyes. I have a Vault full of the stuff, never mind a house of my own. I do not, nor have I ever wanted, anything from you pathetic animals."

As the man's meaty paws twitched toward the coffee table, Harry just scooped up the few Galleons he had left from the end of the previous year with a dismissive "I do not think so Uncle Vernon." Sweeping a green eyed gaze over his closest blood relatives he suddenly saw them as what they were, pitiable, small people, not even worthy of his notice. "Okay Aunt Petunia, how about a little truth from you, while I decide whether or not I am willing to go to any effort to keep you alive."

Petunia's eyes went wide as she found herself pinned by a stare holding no affection, and no remorse. Gulping she asked "W-what do you mean?"

"I would like your opinion as it happens. Had the two of you died..." he swept a hand between the two adults "...Would Lily Potter have stuffed Duddykins in a Cupboard under the stairs? You know, in an attempt to force magic into him."

The silence began to drag on for long seconds, and then long minutes, while Harry refused to blink or to look away.

"Then explain to me why I should ask good people to waste important resources protecting you. Because in all honesty, this is my War. I am the one running it for all intents and purposes. And with my girlfriend having recently gone missing, I'm beginning to think any effort going into keeping you three alive should be better spent looking for HER!"

He punctuated that last with a hammerstroke of fist smashing the coffee table to jagged shards of glass. Blood dripping from his lacerated hand Harry Potter swept from the room.

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The basic gist to the Ritual Ginevra was attempting was actually fairly straightforward. The book had informed her that strong magical blood was important and had been quite verbose in explain how those of Lesser Blood would undoubtedly die in the attempt. Secondly it had gone on to explain how the most magically powerful individuals were those who had not only strength of blood, but strength of circumstance.

This had made sense to Ginevra, in that she could see how one born powerful would become more so should they practice extensively. In a similar way to how one would run regularly to develop stronger muscles.

She had come to a tentative translation of the Ritual and had been calling it 'the Trial of Ares.' It would force a large amount of magical growth on the subject in a short amount of time. The amount of growth would be based on the individual strength of the five principle ingredients, -thirteen in the case of the adapted Ceremony- as well as a few other more minor details which Ginevra had not fully understood.

Accurately drawn Runes, and correctly prepared Potion would be the things which aided her in actually surviving the process. They would keep her focused and aware enough to ride out the storm. This did less than nothing with helping her deal with the pain however.

"Ghaxx-!" She had been screaming at the very tops of her lungs for more than four days now, so it was of small surprise that whatever words she had been using at the beginning had long since been

abandoned for incomprehensible wails of anguish. Guttural roars which mix with those of the few surviving Death Eaters who were aiding her, albeit without their consent.

As was mentioned the Runes and Potion did nothing to dull the pain, and this was actually a good thing. Tremendous waves of power, at once molten starbright and glacial cold crashed into her very magic from one direction and then another. Never letting up or giving her an instant long enough for even thought. She was forced to the forefront every second, a single instant where she loses her grip or her focus would end it, frying her from existence itself.

In a situation like that pain was your friend, it showed you how you were still blessedly alive.

Had she time for thought she might have been reflecting on whether or not the price was too high. Not the pain or the struggle, the price she would have to pay even if she survived the experience. From what she had read in the book bound in black leather, she would be forced to sacrifice her ability to feel... a certain way toward members of the opposite sex. A big thing to be lost when her boyfriend was currently Harry Potter, but with what she had done to him, Ginevra felt she would be less useful to him in the bedroom than she would be on the battlefield.

Besides, although she hadn't realised it yet, she actually liked the battlefield just as much.

As the last man fell, sweet darkness finally claimed the woman.

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With a headache worse than the morning after she'd spent in the Hufflepuff girl's dorms last year, Ginevra came back to the land of the living. A monstrously huge white Owl easily the size of the Hogwarts Express was about to peck her eyes out.

"Gyaaaah!" She screamed as she clumsily dove to her feet.

Eventually she noticed that the Owl was in fact simply very close when it woke her, but that didn't stop her heart from beating at a thousand miles per hour. Ginevra performed a spell to determine the time and date, and found that she'd been gone from the Burrow for a

full seven days. She guessed that maybe four or five of those where spent screaming in the timelessness of 'the Trial of Ares' and two or three flat out on the hard stone floor of the basement in the House of Black. 'How the hell did an Owl get down here anyway?'

Suddenly she realised what that meant and she let out a scream of "Ha! It Woooork-eeeeed! Weeee-ee" while she danced in a circle and laughed with joy. The Owl simply looked on this display with an imperious dignity. "Oh, don't look at me like that Hedwig. It worked, this is great."

Deciding she'd better clean things up a little before she went home and tried to feed everyone her mostly believable story, she asked Hedwig to return to the Burrow with the letter unopened, and that she'd be over there shortly. A request the Snowy Owl eventually complied with to Hedwig's obvious dissatisfaction.

Long hours later Ginevra, bleary eyed despite the days of unconsciousness stumbled from the Knight Bus, leaving a tip for Monkfish and thanks for getting her home safe and fast. Early morning light was beginning to outline the eastern horizon as she pocketed the Gold she'd managed to liberate from the Death Eaters along with a number of captured wands, and stumbled toward her distinctive family home.

Just as she was about to push open the front door she heard "Stop right where you are and keep your wand where I can see it" and as she felt the uncomfortable heat associated with a wand being pressed to her throat she decided to comply.

"It's me Gin, the youngest Weasley sibling," looking over her shoulder she recognised a tall bald frame "do you not recognise me Kingsley?"

"Drop your wand and into the house, we need to verify it is really you." Shacklebolt said in a tone which brooked no nonsense.

Eventually she was plonked down in her father's favourite chair and her family began hurrying into the room. Harry and Hedwig were coming down from the top floor and would be there any moment, but at the time she did not question how she knew that. Eventually her family and a few friends were sitting around her looking suspicious,

a little hopeful, and beneath it all she noted a deep sombreness hanging heavily on the Burrow.

"What did you get for Solstice when you were nine years old Ginny" her father questioned directly.

Twiggling on that they are testing for a Polyjuice she just answered, then went on to look at her eldest brother "...and Bill lost his virginity to a muggle named Sarah Townsend, I walked in on the two of them. He'd been stupid enough to bring her into a magical home when I was six, although he may have sworn me to secrecy after it happened."

"That's her, you can tell by the eye twinkling thing she does when she's up to mischief. She's like Dumbledore in that." Bill declared to the room in confirmation. They all smiled a little and she was given back her wand, before the eldest asked "So what happened tell us where you have been?"

Closing her eyes in obvious fatigue she went about describing her completely untrue story "I'm not totally sure, I think I've been unconscious for a long time. I remember going to town to buy some marjoram after dinner, then I guess I was hit with a spell or something." The room didn't look happy about her recklessly going to the shops alone during a war, but Ginevra continued attempting to look confused and honest as she could.

"I eventually came too and there was these two men who I think might have been Death Eaters because of the black cloaks, only they thought I was asleep still. I kind of stabbed one and took his wand, and the other one threw a curse at me before I stunned him. I guess I got out of there somehow because I was, and still kind of am, really tired. I called the Knight Bus and the next thing I know I'm getting attacked by Auror Shacklebolt."

They then spent the longest time questioning her about more details, Ginevra having had the foresight to come up with a meticulous story in advance so as not to have to tell people about her Ritual.

Eventually they began to disperse, but then she asked a question they all would rather she hadn't.

"Where's George?"

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"Where's George?"

The exact same question was asked six hours ago, the fighters having just finished ensuring that all the people in the Burrow were in fact who they claimed to be.

Looking at one another the room turned to George's protector "He-, He got hit" said Remus Lupin.

"Got hit-" repeated Hermione in a small voice "What do you mean got hit?"

"Snape's work," said Lupin finally.

"Snape?" shouted Harry, "You didn't say-"

"He lost his hood during the chase. 'Sectumsempra' was always a speciality of Snape's. I wish I could say I'd paid him back in kind, but it was all I could do to get out of there after he went down, there was-, there was just no time."

Silence fell on the small group as they contemplated the loss. Fred was in shock not even moving, skin cold to the touch. Molly was not much better, quietly sobbing into her husband's arms.

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"D-dead. How can George be dead, you mean he's lost..." but then reality crashed over Ginevra, this was not the first brother she'd lost. She could only pray it would be the last. She did not hold out much hope of that dream though.

Mad-Eye came striding through the room a long while later, an irate Dung Fletcher held by the ear. "That'll teach you for runnin' off from me in the middle of a mission." The scared man declared, throwing the thief into a corner.

This broke the redhead out of her thoughts and she set about getting the full story of the night's events. There had been an extrication attempt to remove Harry from his relative's house,



Polyjuice Potion and seven Harry Potters. Voldemort could fly without a broom apparently and was called almost instantly along with the entire Inner Circle, and a number of others under an Imperius Curse. George got the top of his head sliced off by Snape with a spell Harry had said was in the Prince's book, Dung had fled immediately on seeing the Dark Lord and Mad-Eye had been forced to abandon the fight once his charge was gone. Hagrid -who was the one escorting Harry for some reason- ended up totalling a motorbike once owned by Sirius, and lastly his Firebolt was lost somewhere over Surry.

"You tried to disarm Stan Shunpike?" the redhead asked Harry in disbelief.

Protesting the boy said "He was obviously under the Imperius, he didn't know what he was doing."

She exchanged a look with the Snowy Owl and the two glared at the boy "We are going to have a discussion about priorities at some point soon. Imperius or not the man was trying to kill you, you are to take that seriously from now on or we will cause you a great deal of harm." Following a long discussion Ginevra was dead on her feet and declared "I'm exhausted, we can continue this tomorrow."

Then she stormed up the stairs and into her room.

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Ginevra woke in a warm comforting embrace, long supple arms snaked around her body and a pair of hands firmly attached to her chest. 'This is nice' she thought idly, before a distinctly feminine moan snapped her to full awareness.

"Fleur! What the hell are you doing in my bed?" She squealed in shock bolting to her feet.

Eyes fluttering open prettily in the midday sunlight the French woman answered "You came in and settled yourself beside me earlier. I was quite comfortable. Did you not sleep well Ginevra?"

"Erm, yeah. Great actually. I really got in beside you? I was kind of tired, sorry about that." She begged a hasty retreat ignoring strange feelings, and grabbed both her Grandmothers old wand and her

favourite of the thirteen captured wands she had been using last night. Ginevra didn't know why that specific wand seemed so right in her hands, but it was. And even though she'd found channelling even enough magic to call the Knight Bus horrendously painful, she knew that the thing would be a far better fit than the wand she had been using for the past five years.

Very little got done that day, with a sombre attitude hanging heavy over the Burrow the family had buried their second fallen brother, and plans to go all out fixing up the place for the wedding were carried out lacking even token levels of enthusiasm. Ginevra had gotten her gold from Mundungus following his attendance to the service, and she had noticed Hermione stuffing a tent into a small beaded bag which was clearly much bigger on the inside.

"Would you like any help Hermione?" the redhead asked once she noticed the older girl was alone.

The look of someone who has been caught doing something they shouldn't be crossed the brunettes face and Ginevra thought 'Muggleborns really need to learn how to lie with a straight face.'

Hermione eventually stuttered out "N-no, I don't need any help. Why do you ask?"

"You are obviously leaving soon, if you need a hand getting things together I can help. Have you packed food to go along with that tent?" Hermione's eyes bulged at the overlooked suggestion and she went on "Tell me what you need and I'll do a shopping trip, you don't even have to tell me what you need the stuff for, I won't ask. Just give me the Gold and a list, I know you two are keeping things from everyone and its fine."

"I am not the only one keeping things to herself. I do not believe that kidnapping story for one minute, more happened and you are refusing to say!" She retorted hoping to turn the tables.

The redhead just looked at her for an extended moment thinking. "True," she eventually stated "I'm suffering pretty severe magical exhaustion also. I'd just prefer not to speak of what happened if that is okay with you, it was far from a pleasant experience." Ginevra knew this particular understatement would be misinterpreted by the older girl, which was specifically why it had been voiced.

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"Absolutely not!" Harry shouted as soon as he had heard their proposal. "It's far too dangerous."

The younger girl got a look which he would swear was amusement as she retorted with "Shopping is far too dangerous Harry? Shopping?"

"Yes! There is a war on in case you haven't noticed, people vanish all of the time. You vanished less than a week ago, remember?"

"You are being ridiculous Harry. I'm going anyway so you may as well give me a list of things you need, and it's better I go because let's face it, you too are muggleborns and would stand out like a sore thumb."

Harry found this comment confusing and asked "Muggleborn? I'm not a muggleborn. My parents were magical Gin," she raised an eyebrow and he continued "and it doesn't make any difference anyway it's not like you can tell at a glance that Hermione's parents are muggles."

"Of course I can tell at a glance, you two stand out wherever you go." His still sort of girlfriend attested "And anyway, you are kind of a muggleborn, muggleraised maybe. Whatever it doesn't matter, if one of us had to go on an illicit shopping run I'm the one who would be in the least danger because I can blend in!"

It took a full twenty minutes of circular argument before the Harry finally agreed to sign a Gringotts note, and it was four long hours later before the girl found the opportunity to sneak out of the Burrow.

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'Is a hundred Galleons enough Gin? I swear to the gods Harry is an idiot sometimes.' Ginevra thought to herself as she stalked down Knockturn Alley later that night. She had finished visiting Gringotts to withdraw some of Harry's gold, and after a long boring evening spent collecting various items and Potions ingredients from the Apothecary in Diagon Alley, she was now off to do the rest of her own shopping.

Her own thirty Galleons from Dung and a little under ten from the Death Eaters, and she considered herself quite rich. She knew from her O.W.L. Muggle Studies class that the idiotic muggles use worthless pieces of paper for currency, but if a fifty pound note is worth a lot to them then she'd worked out that she was carrying the equivalent of around two thousand pounds. Which she'd guess was quite a lot of money, 'it's certainly a fair amount of gold' she mused idly.

Ginevra had stopped at Jimmy Kiddell's Wonderful Wands, and Master Kiddell had informed the redhead that her new favourite wand was Ten Inch Hawthorn and Dragon Heartstring, which he attested was taken from a Chinese Fireball. She would have preferred to go to Ollivander's, but the creepy man would doubtlessly have recognised her and told, like everybody, as swell as the sneaking suspicion that someone had told her he was dead. Nevertheless Kiddell was a Master Wandmaker and just because he didn't specialise in only three wand cores, did not mean he lacked the skill or experience to be useful.

Spying a man selling muggle heads out of a dark alleyway, Ginevra noticed something very interesting amongst the piles of crap the man was trying to unload. After taking a few moments pretending to be looking at anything but the item she had spotted she asked "...-not really that interested in the bracelet now I think on it. Still, how much for the rusty knife friend?"

When she was younger and still thought of herself as Ginny, she was only really good at a few subjects taught at Hogwarts. Her hexes were always among the best in the class, making Defence fairly easy. Her Potion's were just as good, mainly due to the fact that she knew instinctively that the art was absolutely nothing in the world like cooking, a distinction which Harry and most muggleraised never really figured out. But it was History in which she really shined. Ignoring the Goblin obsessed ghost the younger Ginevra had always been fascinated by Wizard History, and self study had made her easily top of her class in the subject.

So for once that knowledge of ancient and not so ancient wars had paid off, and for a paltry three Sickles she had scammed the rumped street urchin out of 'that rusty knife.' Even though the thing

was bare blade, lacking a handle, and in need of some serious work, she'd just gotten the deal of the decade.

With a decadent smile on her teenage face Ginevra whisked her way toward her less than reputable destination, and the rest of her purchases.

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"Harry are you okay? You don't look so hot."

"Dumbledore lived at Godric's Hollow." Hermione responded to Ginevra's question quietly from her seat next to Harry. The Wedding had begun to wind down, the bride and groom had long since retired, and the redhead was returning from a dance with Quidditch Star Victor Krum, who had been far less grabby than she'd expected.

Her brows knitted as she started to respond "Er, so what if he did? What difference does that mak-" she trailed off as a silvery mist coalesced into the form of a lynx which spoke in the deep calm tones of Kingsley Shacklebolt.

"The Ministry has fallen. Scrimgeour is dead. They are coming."

Scant moments passed as things went to hell. The familiar dark cloaked figures of Death Eaters Apparated in bare seconds after the warning. Hermione unceremoniously latched on to both her companions and the three felt themselves squeezed through a tiny space, a sensation still new to the redhead because she had only once before experienced Side-Along Apparition.

Disoriented from the method of travel, Ginevra eventually looked around at what was clearly a muggle area and she asked "Where are we?" the brunette was about to respond when she'd been cut off with "Better question; why the hell did you bring me, weren't you supposed to leave me behind on your mysterious expedition?"

"Tottenham Court Road" panted Hermione. "Walk, just walk. I-I don't know why, I just did it. We need to get somewhere to change and think."

Midnight blue met unforgivable green as the former boyfriend and girlfriend locked eyes. Still a little shaken from the rapid departure

from the Burrow, the two nevertheless grabbed an arm each of their brunette friend and dragged her into an establishment signed in bold golden letters on a black background, labelling the place 'THE TOTTENHAM.'

Bustling their way through the busy bar Hermione got over her agitation at being in a bar, and Ginevra thought to herself 'I don't think this would have been her first choice to enter had she been thinking about it.' Hermione immediately put herself back in charge and began throwing up a strong Notice-Me-Not Charm so as to garner a bit of privacy. She ordered Harry to change into clothes she'd stored in her small beaded bag, and he had changed by the time the redhead had returned with three large bubbling drinks.

"What? I Confounded the barmaid, she didn't look that smart to begin with so what does it matter?" The statement actually managed to throw the woman into a spiral of indignation powerful enough to temporarily dwarf her other looming problems.

When Hermione had ground down far enough and Ginevra had put down her empty glass, Harry shook his head stating "Voldemort has the Ministry, and you're worried about her paying for drinks?"

Despite it not being appropriate Ginevra couldn't fully hide her amusement and so missed the two large men approaching the table. With a scream Hermione yelled "Dolohov!" and the three were in motion, with Harry sending a 'Stupefy' at the Death Eater while pushing the redhead off her seat.

This was both a good thing and a bad thing as he saved Ginevra's life once again, at the cost of a bellowed 'Expulso' impacting half a dozen muggles standing behind her which transfigured them into chunks of gore. Blood matted hair framing her face Ginevra intoned a flame curse taught by Bill at the same moment as Hermione sent a Severing Charm toward the second Death Eater.

'Flammasectum'

The rolling fire that emerged created such a powerful blaze, one hot enough to render the target unrecognisable, a blast that flayed the flesh of the enemy stupid enough to be targeted by the enraged redhead. An ecstatic look of fury crossed her face as the man screamed his last and she thanked her brother mentally. Even

though the man admitted he was far from the best with a wand, Ginevra had asked Bill for the most powerful fire he knew how to conjure, and something a dodgy Dutch bodyguard he'd met in Egypt shared came through for him. 'I'll thank the guy if I ever meet him.'

Horried look on her face Hermione set about attempting to put out the blaze and repair the building while Harry banished muggles out the door and said "No time for that Hermione, Gin still has the Trace on her. They're able to track her magic and will be on us in minutes, we've got to get somewhere else now!"

"We go to Godrics Hollow" Ginevra inserted forcefully.

Turning to her, Hermione's eyes bulged at the notion "What! Why?"

"You were both going on about visiting at some point," She stated in the now empty building "the Death Eaters will be busy attacking Ministry positions for a while, so whatever response Tom might have had in mind should Harry go there will be weakened." Blue eyes had turned and taken them both in before she finished "Besides, do you have any better ideas?"

The three swiftly departed to a thunderous crack of Disapparation.

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#### Lens of Sanity

The monetary system is contradictory in canon because JKR told the press she cannot even add apparently, still: Galleon=£50, Sickle=£3, Knut=10p, seems to make the most sense.

1Galleon=17Sickles ...so ... $50/17=£3$

1Sickle=29Knut ...so ... $3/29=£0.10$

That way the Tri-Wizard winnings could purchase a house, Harry's wand cost him £350, and the Knight Bus was like a wicked expensive taxi. For all of those living in the mighty USofAmericana that would mean One Galleon is worth about Eighty Bucks.

Up next; Godrics Hollow, fights, the team splits up, Fanservice, and as always; vague foreshadowing.

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Due to pretty much complete lack of interest in this story I'm probably going to just put it on hold for a while unless I have reason to do otherwise. I'll focus mostly on 'An Old and New World.' What's strange is that THIS story actually has a plot unlike that one. Harry/Hermione spending lots of time together "alone" in the first part of the Horcrux hunt, Gin is at Hogwarts working with Neville and the Army, Fire Affinity Blood Gift which Luna calls Heliopath, a new way of playing Harry becoming the legitimately powerful hero, and all my favourite Tropes getting applied to a DLP Ginny Weasley making her one Badass, Unfettered, Not Left Handed, Heroic Sociopath, Blood Knight with a Life Debt polarised into Single Target Sexuality. Alas just because I was looking forward to the scenes in Malfoy Manor does not mean anybody else was.

What do you think, am I wasting my time?

LoS

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Chp5